Saint Paul Planning Commission City Hall Conference Center 15 Kellogg Boulevard West

Minutes October 17, 2008

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, October 17, 2008, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Mmes. Donnelly-Cohen, Lu, Morton; Wencl; and

Present: Messrs. Alton, Bellus, Johnson, Kramer, Nelson, and Spaulding, and Ward.

Commissioners Mmes. *Faricy, *Porter, *Smitten, and Messrs. *Barrera, *Commers, *Goodlow,

*Gordon, and *Margulies.

Absent:

*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond for the Planning Administrator; Allan Torstenson, Patricia

James, Lucy Thompson, Greta Alquist and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning

and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes October 3, 2008.

MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved approval of the minutes of October 3, 2008. Commissioner Donnelly-Cohen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Alton had no announcements.

III. Planning Administrator's Announcements

In the absence of Larry Soderholm, Donna Drummond reported on planning-related business at the City Council for last week and their agenda for next week.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING: <u>Land Use Plan</u> – Item from the Comprehensive Planning Committee. (*Penelope Simison*, 651/266-6554)

Chair Alton announced that the Saint Paul Planning Commission is holding a public hearing on the Land Use Plan. Notice of the public hearing was published in the Legal Ledger on September 22, 2008, and was mailed to the citywide Early Notification System list of recipients and other interested parties.

Penny Simison PED staff gave a presentation on the proposed Land Use Plan and the maps in the plan. Ms. Simison talked about the similarities with the existing plan, such as stable neighborhoods, growth, a vibrant downtown, and urban character. Key elements of the proposed

plan are areas of stability and areas of change; mixed use growth at neighborhood centers and along major corridors. Each area of growth capitalizes on transit and it seeks to have higher density residential development. In addition land for job centers capitalizes emerging labor market. There are also policies that seek to find ways to make smaller sites into job centers.

Chair Alton read the rules of procedure for the public hearing.

The following people spoke:

1. Susan Kimberly Vice President of Economic Development for the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Kimberly said the Chamber supports the proposed Land Use Plan. Although the chamber does not endorse every word, it thinks the plan sets a reasonable framework for encouraging growth in Saint Paul. She continues to say that there are several aspects of the plan that they enthusiastically endorse: Defining areas where change is likely to happen, acknowledging the benefits of higher density development, the importance of public transportation infrastructure, designating substantial areas for change, and acknowledging the need for designating specific areas for job creation, retention and expansion.

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However, the potential of this plan will not be achieved if the right balance between public regulation and private investment is not met. There is a need to look at the regulatory framework that governs business and revitalization efforts. This framework needs to be simplified. The Land Use Plan provides a good framework for encouraging walkable urban development in Saint Paul, but to make it a reality we need to align our dreams with our regulations.

Commissioner Johnson asked what specific thing(s) does the Chamber have the most problem with?

Ms. Kimberly said she thinks the concept of designating areas of change and areas of stability goes a long in reducing the tension between business areas and residential neighborhoods.

2. Kelly Warden from the Saint Paul Port Authority, 345 St. Peter Street, Saint Paul, MN. The Port Authority would like to see a policy of no net loss of industrial land. She said that the city has lost 27 acres of industrial land from 2000 – 2005, and that land could have provided 4100 jobs. The Port Authority has a record of acquiring industrial land, cleaning it up and providing jobs for the community. Now there is not land available to continue this process. The Port Authority has recently negotiated the purchase of the 3M site on Saint Paul's Eastside.

Commissioner Kramer questioned talks about the 3M land and the Port Authority's interest in selling industrial land on the 3M site to Ramsey County for office purposes. Commissioner Kramer wanted to know how that jives with the Port's support of a no net loss of industrial land policy.

Ms. Warden said the Port Authority feels there should be a policy surrounding industrial land and jobs. Given market opportunities, there might be the possibility to put higher density jobs on a given site. The Port's fear is more of this industrial land turned into something that doesn't create jobs.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Donnelly-Cohen moved to close the public hearing, leave the record open for written testimony until 4:30 p.m. on Friday, October17, 2008, and to refer the matter back to the Comprehensive Planning Committee for review and recommendation.

Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

V. Zoning Committee

NO BUSINESS

Commissioner Morton announced the next Zoning Committee meeting will be on October 23, 2008.

VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

No Report

VII. Neighborhood Planning Committee

No Report

VIII. Communications Committee

No Report

IX. Central Corridor Development Analysis

Twin Cities LISC/Corridor Housing Initiative (CHI) – Guest presentation by Gretchen Nicholls, Twin Cities LISC and Barbara Raye, Executive Director, Center for Policy Planning and Performance. The CHI held community workshops on the redevelopment potential of three sites along the Central Corridor, where residents and designers used model buildings and financial pro formas to create development guidelines.

Gretchen Nicholls gave a power point presentation that provided an overview of the materials distributed. Ms. Nicholls said that the development guidelines themselves are the actual findings of the final report. Also included was a fact sheet showing how the financial analysis was done, a summary of a developer panel that was held, and a community development wish list summary. Ms. Nicholls explained that the reason for doing this process was to look in more depth at the potential of development at three example sites along the Central Corridor, helping the community determine what it would like to see and what is economically feasible to build.

Barbara Raye explained more about the initiative, which operates under some core principles. This is a proactive planning process. Developers are finding that the neighborhood needs to own what happens in its own neighborhood or it won't be sustained, protected or welcomed. So the Corridor Housing Initiative is about creating partnerships. Ms. Raye added that good development is a two or three year process at a minimum. So the goal is to be a little ahead of the process but not so far that people do not remember the conversation. CHI likes to work with the community before there is a particular plan for a site by looking at opportunity sites in the area.

Ms. Raye said that the intent is to be able to inform the development process with the guidelines that are developed.

Gretchen Nicholls talks about outreach. CHI sent approximately 5,000 post cards to people in the area to publicize the workshops, along with email notification, flyers, and the CHI and City web sites. Ms. Nicholls said they picked three sites to work with during the workshops. An analysis was done of the whole corridor and they found three sites that were for sale, the Hmong Funeral Home site, the Saxon Ford site and the Whitaker Buick site.

Alan Arthur president of Aeon a provider of affordable apartment homes for people in the community. Mr. Arthur assisted with the financial feasibility analysis for various project scenarios that were developed. Mr. Arthur said the purpose is to put some market logic behind some of the different ideas and options that the community came up with through the block exercise.

Commissioner Bellus said that the commissioners received some correspondence about the Hmong Funeral Home site, saying that the district council has recommended, after a series of public meetings, that housing not be considered at all for that site. Commissioner Bellus then asked Ms. Nicholls to reconcile that with what the CHI process came up with for that site.

Ms. Nicholls said District 7 and the Corridor Housing Initiative processes were almost parallel in terms of timeline. She says the CHI process was informed by a larger set of stakeholders and District 7's was more focused on the residents near the site. Both have their values and relevant for the stakeholders they represent. But we are all stakeholders in the process and we are advising the city about what's been learned and what the input has been. Housing is a critical component along these corridors, in places where density is a better fit. If we anticipate growth, we hope a lot of it would happen along the corridors, rather than internal to the neighborhoods. Ms. Nicholls said the final workshop was how to refine the recommendations for how to guide development from here. The CHI guidelines suggest that the first goal for any new development is to strengthen neighborhood assets and character. The second goal is to incorporate strategies for multi-modal compatibility, and third is to encourage development that is mixed-use and mixed-market. These recommendations can be used as a marketing tool to improve development interest in available sites. We hope this can become a useful additional informational piece as the City moves forward on considering future development on available sites along the Central Corridor.

Several of the Commissioners complimented the process, stating they had been involved in other CHI workshops and processes. They applauded their effort and said the whole process was very beneficial.

<u>Central Corridor Development Strategy: Financial Feasibility of Development Analysis</u> – Informational presentation on the results of this study by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development. (*Donna Drummond*, 651/266-6556)

Donna Drummond PED staff gave a power point presentation that provided background on why the study was done, and explained the process of the study and the results. The study evaluated four sites along the corridor that were used to represent the different types of sites that are available for development. The study then came up with some theoretical developments that might happen on those sites and did a financial analysis to see if the developments were

economically feasible given current market conditions. People can access this on the web site at www.ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Commissioner Lu asked about recent development along the corridor and asked what new developments would not be considered transit-oriented development.

Ms. Drummond said the new Super Target store on University at Hamline is not considered transit-oriented development, although the City worked with Target to include some transit-oriented features, including a pedestrian walkway from the door to University, an enhanced bus waiting area on Hamline, and a new east-west "street" through the parking lot that creates future development parcels along University. Over time, we hope the Midway shopping area can gradually transform with new development that has more transit-oriented features, that is elements that made the developments more pedestrian and transit user-friendly.

Commissioner Ward asked about the analysis of housing development feasibility, was there any thought due to the credit crunch and what types of housing should be built given that?

Ms. Drummond said that most of the study was done before our real credit crunch started to become apparent, in the last month or so. And the study was not an attempt to say what should be built, but more of an analysis of what would be economically feasible to build in the private market without public subsidies. Decisions about public subsidies and other public policies will have an impact on what actually gets built.

X. Task Force Reports

No Reports

XI. Old Business

None

XII. New Business

None

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary Planning and Economic Development Department, City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,	Approved
	(Date)
Larry Soderholm, AICP	Marilyn Porter
Planning Administrator	Secretary of the Planning Commission

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